

CITY OF NEWARK
Newark, Delaware

Traffic Committee Meeting
January 19, 2016
3:30 p.m.

Members Present: D/C Kevin Feeney, Lt. Fred Nelson, Tom Coleman, Marvin Howard, Dave Gula, Tom Parkins

Absent: Andrew Haines

Guest: Chris Locke, General Council (Lang Development)

1. Request to designate the west side of Tyre Avenue as a Special Residential Parking District.

DC Feeney said this was a request received from a resident. Tom Coleman said initially it was signed as a Special Residential Parking District, however couldn't find any record and as a result signs were removed. A resident has requested that the special residential parking district be reinstated. DC Feeney said a total of twenty-five letters were mailed to property owners on Tyre Avenue. A total of nine responses were received with all owners in favor of the request.

Motion to approve the request to designate the west side of Tyre Avenue as a Special Residential Parking District.

Motion Passed. Vote: 6 to 0.

2. Request to eliminate parking on the west side of Center Street. (Tabled November 17, 2015 Meeting)

LT. Nelson said this was received from Mayor Sierer due to traffic congestion on Center Street in the direction heading north from Main Street. Lt. Nelson said he spoke to members of Aetna Fire Department, Station 9 that are also in favor of eliminating parking for logistical purposes in getting emergency equipment to and from Center Street/New Street.

DC Feeney said a mailing was sent to affected property owners on Center Street and Linden Street. DC Feeney said a total of thirteen letters were mailed, we received eleven responses. Three responses were favorable and eight responses were unfavorable.

DC Feeney opened the floor for public comment. Chris Locke, General Council, Lang Development, owner/partner of 21, 27, 39, 45, and 49 Center Street. Mr. Locke said they are in the process of redeveloping the west side of Center Street which includes a proposal that would eliminate parking on the west side of Center Street and will provide off street parking for residents. Mr. Locke requested the committee consider postponing their decision until the proposal goes before city council. Mr. Locke said if city council approves their proposal at which time the committee could consider eliminating parking on the east side of Center Street.

Lt. Nelson said he researched the accident history on Center Street. Lt. Nelson said there have been a total of eight collisions on Center Street within the past three years which may or may not be related to congestion on Center Street. Lt. Nelson said he believes the accident data is low and doesn't feel that postponing this request would present a safety issue.

Motion to table the request pending city council's decision on Lang Developments redevelopment proposal on Center Street.

Motion Passed. Vote: 6 to 0.

3. Request for a no parking zone on the south side of Bellevue Road. (Tabled November 17, 2015 Meeting)

DC Feeney said a total of nine letters were mailed. We received one response that was favorable. DC Feeney said in his opinion this is a practical request.

Motion to approve the request for a no parking zone on the south side of Bellevue Road.

Motion Passed. Vote: 6 to 0.

4. Request to install a traffic light on Academy Street near the new dining/residence halls.

DC Feeney said this request was received by a University of Delaware employee and was forwarded to the Traffic Committee through the University of Delaware Police Department. DC Feeney said the employee suggested a traffic signal alternative to the yellow light that currently exists would be a better alternative to alleviate traffic during the peak time at lunch and from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Lt. Nelson researched the accident history and found there was one pedestrian accident occurring north of the crosswalk with the pedestrian being at fault. In 2013, there was a rear end collision that occurred at the crosswalk.

Tom Parkins asked if this would be a lighted midblock crosswalk. Tom Coleman said it would be similar to what is being proposed for Delaware Avenue and Main Street.

Tom Coleman said at this time he doesn't see a need for a traffic light at this location. Tom Coleman said his alternative solution would be to reach out to University of Delaware Police Department requesting an officer be stationed at the crosswalk during peak times. Dave Gula said a traffic light is a very expensive solution and would need to go through a warrant process. This is a lot to be considered for a location that hasn't been a chronic problem.

DC Feeney asked if a HAWK signal would be applicable at this location. Tom Coleman said it's a possibility. The signal would be a constant pedestrian phase until a vehicle pulls up. Tom Coleman said the HAWK signals are about \$75,000+. Lt. Nelson said if a signal was entertained at this location, the University of Delaware should provide funding.

Motion to deny the request to install a traffic light on Academy Street near the new dining/residence halls and request UDPD station an officer at this location for traffic control during peak hours.

Motion Passed. Vote: 6 to 0.

5. Request for a stop sign at Short Lane and Lehigh Road.

DC Feeney said this request was received through a resident through her council member.

DC Feeney asked if this was addressed in the past. Lt. Nelson said he believes it was, however believes it was turned down as it didn't meet the criteria for traffic volume.

Lt. Nelson said in the past three years there was one accident that was a hit and run. Lt. Nelson said the speed sign was placed on Lehigh Road for a week during the month of December. There were a total 2,125 vehicles recorded, 1,800 vehicles were traveling 25 mph or less (posted speed limit), 234 vehicles traveling 26-30 mph, 58 vehicles traveling 31-35 mph, 11 vehicles traveling 36-40 mph, 3 vehicles traveling 41-45 mph. Tom Coleman said the 85th percentile were traveling 25 mph or less.

Dave Gula said stop signs aren't intended to control a speeding issue. Dave Gula asked if the constituent was worried about crashes or speed. Lt. Nelson said she was worried about the safety of pedestrians. Lt. Nelson said her concern was Lehigh Road heading west speeding past Short Lane.

Tom Parkins asked what the normal traffic flow is going past the intersection. He assumes heading off of West Park Place in the Binns.

Motion to deny the request for a stop sign at Short Lane and Lehigh Road.

Motion Passed. Vote: 6 to 0.

New Business:

Traffic Sub-Committee

DC Feeney said at a previous meeting it was decided to create a Traffic sub-committee to review higher traffic congestion areas and potential issues relating to future development. It was decided the subcommittee would meet and report back to Traffic Committee. A list has been compiled of local bicycle groups that are interested in joining the committee. DC Feeney said they received an overwhelming response and feel it would be a good idea to pare down the list.

Dave Gula said he met with Heather Dunigan that works with WILMAPCO for her input as she serves on Newark Bike Committee and the Parking Committee for the city. Dave Gula said Heather noted that Mark Deshon is confirmed from Newark Bike Committee. Heather said Bike Delaware is already represented through the Newark Bike Committee. Heather said the "Trail Spinners" don't currently have a representative on the Newark Bike Committee and suggested reaching out regarding this. Tom Coleman said the committee would be represented by Newark Public Works & Planning, a representative from the business community, DelDOT Traffic Section, NAACP, Bike Committee and Downtown Newark Partnership. Dave Gula suggested a focus group would be most productive. Lt. Nelson said he would provide dates and begin putting together an agenda. Tom Coleman said considering this is an AD HOC task force advertising wouldn't be necessary. Dave Gula would ask Heather Dunigan for contact information. DC Feeney said Lt. Nelson would be the chair for the AD HOC committee. DC Feeney said Lt. Nelson would send out dates and would try to meet prior to the next Traffic Committee meeting.

Kevin Feeney, Chairman